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SUBJECT: ARRIA FORMULA MEETING ON WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY

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[1](#)B. STATE 54684

[1](#)1. (U) Summary: As part of a US-led initiative to bring more attention to the problem of sexual violence in armed conflict, the UK hosted a meeting on June 11 to bring together members of the Security Council, NGO representatives and UN officials to discuss the role of peacekeepers in protecting women. Briefers at the so-called "Arria Formula" meeting shared the results of a conference held in Wilton Park, UK May 27-29, at which USUN Permanent Representative Ambassador Khalilzad and UKUN Deputy Permanent Representative Karen Pierce spoke. The need for more precise Security Council mandates and doctrine, to help guide peacekeepers in the field was stressed. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (U) At the Arria Formula meeting for Security Council members, NGOs and UN agencies at 3pm on June 11, 2008, chaired by DPR Karen Pierce of the United Kingdom, three panelists addressed the conclusions reached at the Wilton Park Conference (May 27-29, 2008) and offered further issues and recommendations to be considered on: "Women targeted or affected by armed conflict: What role for military peacekeepers?". Panelists included Lt General Jasbir Singh Liddar of India, Ms. Julianne Lusenge of SOFEPADI-RDC of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Ms. Victoria K. Holt of the Stimson Center. Comments were also welcomed from civil society. The Chair began the session by noting that current peacekeeping responses to sexual violence are ad hoc and varying due to ambiguous mandates. She outlined the task to fill the gap between policy created in NY and the realities on the ground at the missions.

[1](#)3. (U) Lt General Liddar, former force commander of UNMIS, highlighted that a holistic approach to peacekeeping which includes timely deployment of forces, clearly defined directives, advanced planning, strong rules of engagement, and a shift to a focus on the rule of law and human rights in recovery and development stages of peacekeeping, is necessary to create an environment that protects civilians, including women and girls. Lt General Liddar noted that there is currently inadequate participation of women in all peacekeeping activities and that it is operationally essential that recruitment efforts aimed at women in all sectors (military, police, medical, language translation, and civil society groups) be augmented. Lt General Liddar also recommended that the Zero Tolerance policy be respected and accountability be insured for all violations.

[1](#)4. (U) Ms. Julianne Lusenge shared that at least 40 women, including girls as young as 3 and women as old as 99, are raped each day in the Democratic Republic of Congo with little to no accountability. This epidemic of sexual violence

prevents women and girls from carrying out everyday activities such as collecting water or even going to school. This negatively affects the entire community, not just women. Ms. Lusenge stated that, "Sexual violence is like a spider web; it touches victims, husbands, children, neighbors and destabilizes the nation". She said that sexual violence is a matter of security and therefore is an issue upon which the Security Council must act. She also remarked that some peacekeepers who initially came to help are now themselves perpetrators of sexual violence. Ms. Lusenge shared that because of her activism against sexual violence, she and her family have been forced into hiding.

¶5. (U) Ms. Holt posed the question, "What does civilian protection mean?" and noted that the interpretation of "protection" varies depending on context. She explained that when asking several military personnel to define protection, they responded that it simply means avoiding casualties. When pushed to rethink protection, their responses shifted to, "shoot the bad guys". Ms. Holt then recommended that Security Council mandates be more explicit in their definitions of civilian protection to avoid such varying interpretations. To this end, Ms. Holt suggested that pre-deployment trainings, such as scenario based trainings, and in-mission trainings on sexual violence be implemented.

¶6. (U) Comments and recommendations from civil society were also made. Human Rights Watch stated that sexual violence is not a new issue and that there is a continued need to seek, gain and react appropriately to information and reports on sexual violence to help end impunity. Human Rights Watch agreed that a robust peacekeeping mandate is needed before troops are deployed.

¶7. (U) CARE recommended that Security Council Resolutions be more robust and address coordination at the country-level with better coordination within the UN system. As information and testimonies of sexual violence are so sensitive and can put victims and witnesses at risk, special efforts must be put forth to safeguard such information. CARE also expressed that current resources available to fight sexual violence are inadequate and need to be increased and that the process of recovery for communities will be lengthy, possibly taking up to 3, 5 or even 10 years.

¶8. (U) Amnesty International commented that a focus must be given to accountability as there can be no peace without justice. Amnesty said that many times the Security Council reports are not comprehensive on sexual violence, and without adequate reports, there is no possibility that mandates will be sufficient. Amnesty recommended that Security Council reports be more extensive and analytical on sexual violence. If no reports exist on sexual violence for a conflict area, then the Security Council must ask why not and ensure that a reporting mechanism is implemented.

¶9. (U) The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom stressed that participation of women is crucial in the fight against sexual violence. WILPF stated that sexual violence is tied to gender inequalities and that increased women's participation in all economic, social and political activities is needed to help decrease inequalities. Women must be asked what threatens them, what their concerns are, and how they can be involved in prevention and protection.

¶10. (U) The International Crisis Group highlighted that the language of SCR1325 is timid with words such as "encourages" or "urges" and should be more forceful with language such as "demands". ICG proposed that concepts such as a Security Council Working Group, benchmarks and other mechanisms to ensure accountability would be helpful.

¶11. (U) Security Council members had the opportunity to respond and ask questions to panelists and civil society. Libya supported the idea of a Security Council Working Group. Libya would also like to see local religious leaders use their influence to better educate local populations as well

as peacekeepers to help prevent sexual violence. Libya hopes that the draft Resolution is adopted by consensus and believes that it will send a strong message that the Security Council is working to end sexual violence in conflict zones.

¶12. (U) France expressed that sexual exploitation and abuse fully comes under the Security Council mandate as it is a clear threat to international peace and security. France also noted that peacekeepers need more guidance, and it is the role of the Security Council to improve this guidance.

¶13. (U) Costa Rica referred to Ms. Holt's discussion of the multiple interpretations of protection and said that a more explicit definition of civilian protection is needed. Costa Rica also stated that cooperation with the ICC, the implementation of SCR1593, better arms controls, and increased coordination and resources are all necessary.

¶14. (U) Burkina Faso expressed that providing gender education and sensitivity training to peacekeepers, young people, students, the military and the community as a whole is imperative. Burkina Faso suggested that the Secretary General's periodic reports include specific information on sexual violence. Burkina Faso also noted that as the UN peacekeeping agenda becomes increasingly decentralized with an increased use of hybrid and regional forces, more support needs to be given to those forces, particularly to the AU, to address sexual violence.

15.(U) The United States expressed that the link between sexual violence and the maintenance of international peace and security is at the heart of the discussion about what the Security Council can do.  
Khalilzad